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AFSPA Reimposed in Key Areas of Manipur

Context: The escalating ethnic violence in Manipur has prompted the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to reimpose the Disturbed Area status in six police station areas across the state's valley regions under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). This move reflects the continued instability in Manipur, a year and a half after the onset of violent ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities.

Key Areas Affected by AFSPA Reimposition

- The following police station areas in Manipur's valley regions have been brought back under AFSPA:
 - » Sekmai (Imphal West)
 - » Lamsang (Imphal West)
 - » Lamlai (Imphal East)
 - » Moirang (Bishnupur)
 - » Leimakhong (Kangpokpi)
 - » Jiribam (Jiribam District)
- These areas were initially part of a gradual withdrawal process from AFSPA in 2022-2023, but recent violence and tensions have prompted the reimposition of the law.

Reasons Behind the AFSPA Reimposition

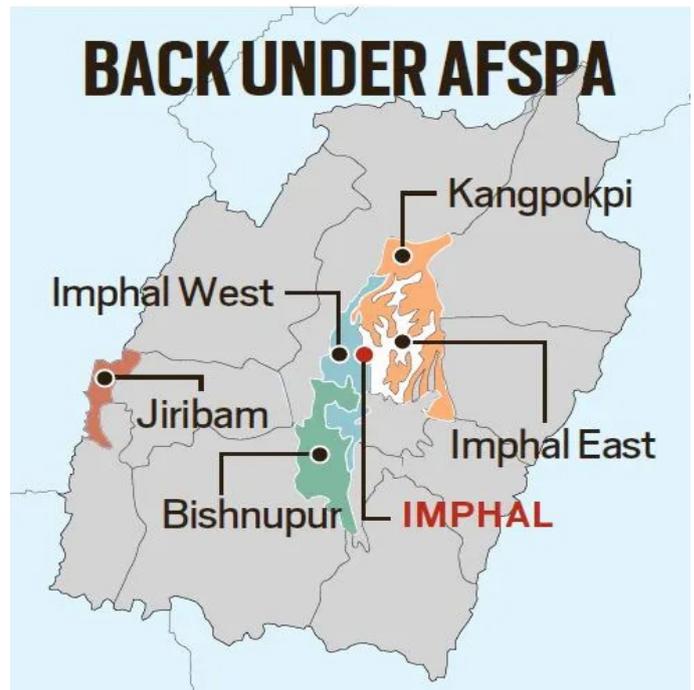
- **Violent Clashes:** There have been frequent firing incidents, violent clashes, and attacks attributed to insurgent groups in the affected regions.
- **Insurgent Activity:** Insurgent groups have reportedly played a key role in perpetrating violence, including bombings, armed attacks, and ambushes against security forces and civilians.
- **High-Tension Districts:** The regions of Bishnupur-Churachandpur, Imphal East-Kangpokpi-Imphal West, and Jiribam remain particularly volatile, with continuing ethnic violence fueling insecurity.

Implications of AFSPA and the Disturbed Area Status

- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) grants the Indian Armed Forces extensive powers in disturbed areas:
 - » **Immunity from Prosecution:** Military personnel

are granted immunity from prosecution unless authorized by the Central Government.

- » **Arrest and Search Powers:** Security forces can arrest individuals without warrants and search premises without legal formalities.
- » **Use of Deadly Force:** The law authorizes the use of deadly force to maintain order, including shooting suspected insurgents or those perceived as threats to security.



Duration:

- The Disturbed Area status under AFSPA is valid for six months and can be extended based on ongoing security reviews.
- In Manipur, AFSPA has been in effect since 1980, and its withdrawal in 2022-2023 was initially viewed as a sign of improved security. However, recent ethnic violence has led to its reintroduction.

Strategic Air Defence Agreement between India and Russia

Context: India and Russia have taken a major step forward in their defence collaboration by signing a Memorandum

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of Understanding (MoU) that focuses on air defence technology. This agreement, formalised between Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Russia's Rosoboronexport.

Key Highlights of the Agreement

- **MoU for Co-development of Pantsir System:**
 - » Focus on the co-development of a Pantsir-variant air defence system tailored to India's defence needs.
 - » The Pantsir system is a hybrid platform combining missiles and guns to counter various aerial threats.
 - » The Pantsir system offers an effective range of up to 15 kilometers, making it crucial for intercepting missiles, aircraft, drones, and other aerial threats.
- **Strategic Significance for India:**
 - » The partnership will help modernise India's defence architecture, improving self-reliance and capability in countering advanced threats.
 - » This MoU strengthens India's commitment to defence self-reliance while reinforcing its ties with Russia, a key defence partner.

Broader context:

- The agreement is part of the long-standing strategic defence partnership between India and Russia, which spans decades and includes joint projects in missiles, naval platforms, and air defence systems.
- Russia has been one of India's principal defence partners, with both countries sharing mutual trust and collaboration on various military technologies.

Focus on Self-Reliance:

- India is increasingly focused on achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing, aligning with the "Make in India" initiative.
- The MoU with Russia underscores India's efforts to advance indigenous defence production capabilities while maintaining strong international partnerships.

Strategic Position in the Indo-Pacific:

- Amid rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific region, India's military and strategic partnerships are crucial for safeguarding national security and asserting its role in regional stability.
- As a rising global power, India's strengthened defence capabilities enable it to engage more effectively in global security discussions.

PAIR Programme to Boost Research and Innovation in Higher Education

Context: The Indian government, through the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), has launched the Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) programme to enhance research-driven higher education across the country.

Key Objectives of the PAIR Programme

- **Enhancing Research Excellence**
 - » Cultivate a culture of research excellence in central and state public universities.
 - » Improve the overall quality of academic research across India.
- **Fostering Collaborative Partnerships**
 - » Bridge the gap between institutions of varied research capabilities.
 - » Pair emerging universities with top-tier institutions to foster innovation through mentorship and knowledge exchange.
- **Transforming the Research Ecosystem**
 - » Enhance the research capabilities, particularly in universities with nascent infrastructure.
 - » Develop a robust and dynamic research ecosystem in India.

How the PAIR Programme Works:

The PAIR programme follows a hub-and-spoke model:

- **Hub Institutions**
 - » These are top-ranked universities in India, such as the top 25 NIRF-ranked institutions and Institutions of National Importance (INIs).
 - » These institutions will serve as hubs and are well-established with strong research infrastructure and expertise.
- **Spoke Institutions**
 - » Spoke institutions include central and state public universities with growing research capabilities, as well as select NITs and IIITs.
 - » These institutions may not have the same level of research infrastructure as the hubs but are poised for growth in research.

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ANRF's Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) Program

Objective

- Transforming Research and Innovation in Indian Universities
- Fostering research excellence in universities, aligned with NEP 2020

Eligibility

Hub Institutions

- Top 25 NIRF-ranked institutions
- Institutions of National Importance within top 50 of the NIRF ranking

Spoke Institutions

- Central and State Public Universities
- Selected NITs and IIITs



- **Mentorship and Knowledge Exchange**
 - » Hub institutions will provide mentorship and guidance on research activities, and offer access to resources and expertise from top-tier faculty and researchers.
 - » Spoke institutions will benefit from multi-departmental faculty collaboration, encouraging interdisciplinary research.
- **Collaboration Model**
 - » Each PAIR network will consist of one hub and up to seven spoke institutions.
 - » Only one proposal per hub institution is allowed, with a mandatory involvement of multi-departmental faculty teams from spoke institutions.

Benefits of the PAIR Programme

- The mentorship-driven approach will foster innovation at spoke institutions, leveraging the resources and expertise of hub institutions.
- This will drive new research outcomes with significant national and global impact.
- By fostering collaboration between institutions, the PAIR programme will help create a strong research network in India, encouraging cross-institutional partnerships and the sharing of best practices and advanced infrastructure.

Alignment with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:

- The PAIR programme aligns closely with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to create a more research-oriented, innovative, and collaborative education system in India.
 - » **Promoting Research at Universities:** The NEP encourages the creation of a research culture in higher education. The PAIR programme directly supports this by enhancing research excellence across universities.
 - » **Encouraging Collaborative Approaches:** The NEP stresses the importance of inter-institutional collaborations to build a more knowledge-driven ecosystem. The PAIR programme's hub-and-spoke model is a practical manifestation of this vision.

Power Packed News

Indian Navy to Conduct Fourth Edition of Coastal Defence Exercise 'Sea Vigil-24'

- The Indian Navy will hold the fourth edition of the Pan-India Coastal Defence Exercise, Sea Vigil-24, on November 20-21, 2024. This large-scale exercise involves six ministries and 21 organizations, covering India's 11,098 km coastline and a 2.4 million square kilometer Exclusive Economic Zone.
- For the first time, officials from the National Security Council Secretariat will join the Coastal Defence & Security Readiness Evaluation (CDSRE) phase, which has been ongoing since October 2024, along with personnel from state marine police, Coast Guard, Customs, and fisheries departments.
- The exercise focuses on securing coastal assets like ports, oil rigs, and Single



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Point Moorings, while also raising awareness about maritime security among coastal communities.

- **About Sea Vigil:** Launched in 2018 to enhance coastal defence after the 26/11 attacks, Sea Vigil assesses the readiness of maritime agencies, identifies gaps, and improves overall coastal security. It also serves as a precursor to the Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX), further strengthening India's maritime defence.

Special Dolphin Ambulance to Be Launched Under Clean Ganga Mission

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the apex body for cleaning and restoring the Ganga, is set to launch a special dolphin ambulance to rescue injured aquatic animals.
- This initiative is part of efforts to preserve the river's biodiversity, with a focus on the endangered Ganges River Dolphin, India's National Aquatic Animal. These dolphins are found not only in the Ganga river system but also in river systems in Bangladesh and Nepal.
- A dedicated vehicle will be developed under the project Advancing Rescue Systems for Conservation of Stranded Gangetic River Dolphins, approved with an estimated budget of ₹1 crore.
- The project aims to enhance conservation efforts by rescuing dolphins in distress, raising public awareness, and building community capacity through training programs.
- In addition to dolphin conservation, the NMCG has approved a significant project for the conservation of endangered turtles in the Ganga basin, particularly in Uttar Pradesh.



Hyderabad Airport Receives Global Recognition for Digital Innovations

- GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) was honored for its advancements in digital innovation at the Airport Excellence Awards held during the Saudi Airport Exhibition 2024.
- The awards ceremony, hosted at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Centre (RICEC), recognized pioneering global innovations in the aviation sector.
- GHIAL's groundbreaking Digital Twin won accolades in the Innovation & Technology and Facility Management categories. This advanced model creates a virtual replica of the physical airport, integrating real-time data from CCTV, sensors, and IoT devices.
- It provides a comprehensive, data-driven view of airport operations, enabling efficient management of terminal functionality, passenger flow, and resources.
- Additionally, GHIAL's Smart Shopping Trolley innovation was recognized as the runner-up in the Airport Revenue Management category.
- The awards affirm Hyderabad Airport's position as a global leader in adopting innovative solutions to meet the dynamic demands of the aviation industry, contributing to a smarter, more sustainable future for air travel.



Asia's Largest Open-Air Trade Fair 'Bali Jatra' Begins in Odisha

- The Bali Jatra, Asia's largest open-air trade fair, has commenced in Odisha to honor the region's rich maritime history. The fair began on the full moon day of Kartika and will conclude on November 22.
- It commemorates Odisha's ancient sea-trading tradition, where traders, known as Sadhabas, embarked on maritime

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voyages in boats called Boitas from the Mahanadi River to distant lands during Kartika Purnima.

- The festival not only celebrates Odisha's historical connection with maritime trade but also showcases its cultural heritage. Various cultural groups from Odisha and other Indian states perform traditional dances, including Odissi, Chhau, Mahari, Gotipua, and Bihu, adding vibrancy to the event.
- Bali Jatra attracts visitors from across the country and beyond, offering an immersive experience of Odisha's heritage, crafts, and cuisine. It also serves as a platform for trade and cultural exchange, connecting people with the state's glorious past.



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